
Microsoft Word: Survival Tips, Tricks and Shortcuts

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You receive a document by email, you get it saved and you open it up. Now you start to make changes. Every time you start a new paragraph something strange happens; you delete a numbered paragraph and the following paragraphs don't renumber like you thought they would; you type a heading for a new section but it doesn't look like the other headings.

As a Trainer and User of both Microsoft's Word and Corel's WordPerfect, I find there are many users that need help when creating or editing documents. If you are one of those people like me that use both Word and WordPerfect, confusion on the best way to work with the features is often an issue. Hopefully, the following tips, tricks and shortcuts will help with some of those Word issues that we all face everyday.

Views – How to look at the document on the screen

There are several ways to display the document when you are working: Normal, Web, Print Layout and Outline. A key thing to remember is that some features don't appear in all views. One very important feature is headers/footers. They show in Layout Print View but do not show in Normal View. The different views can be accessed through the Menu View or the small buttons on the desktop in the lower left document area next to the horizontal scroll bar. The reason you have different views is so each user can work with the text in an efficient method to both enter and revise text.

The most popular way to work is using Print Layout View (**View|Print Layout**). Layout/Print View for seeing what the document really looks when printed. I like working in Normal View (**View|Normal**) because the Style Area¹ is visible. The Style Area is a constant reminder of the style that is assigned to the paragraph and only displays in

¹ This feature can be activated through Tools, Options, Outline and Normal Options sections, Style Area width at 0.5"

Normal View. I can quickly review the formatting and style of the paragraph or assign a different style if needed.

Formatting Marks - Turn them on for visual tracking

The little paragraph symbol button on the Standard Toolbar turns on and off the formatting marks (the official description is Show/Hide). The marks include Tab character, spaces, paragraph marks, hidden text and optional hyphens. When the Formatting Marks are turned on, the Paragraph Mark appears for each paragraph. Also, there will be a “dot” every time the spacebar is touched. (**Tools, Options, Formatting Marks, check All, OK**) You can always use the button on the toolbar to Hide or turn on. I find that have the marks on allows me to look at the text and confirm the spacing is correct, the paragraphs were created the correct spacing after and other formatting is included in the styles. In a more complex document, the Table of Contents levels, Table of Authorities references and even hidden text are shown when Formatting marks are made available to the user. On the other hand, some users just cannot work with this information available.

Formatting Text

Why is formatting text so important? Most users just start typing and then go back and select text and format using Format from the menu each time some attribute is needed. There are two ways to format text - Direct Formatting or Styles.

Direct Formatting is exactly what I just described – adding text to each paragraph or words as they are needed. For example, you add First Line Indent to each paragraph or use the Format Painter. In newer versions of Word, excessive Direct Formatting may cause corruption but I cannot tell you how much is too much. You know as well as I do that a corrupt document is next to impossible to work with. Many times you cannot even open the document. I’ll talk a little more about corrupt documents later.

Don’t take this wrong – I’m not saying that you can’t ever use Direct Formatting. Sometimes it is the way you should add formatting or attributes. You just don’t want to do too much in a longer document. So far, I’ve never had a problem using Direct Formatting in a shorter document, such as a 2 or 3 page letter.

Styles is the other way of Formatting Text. Each paragraph in Word has a Style even if you don’t assign one. The default Style is automatically assigned – that Style is called Normal. The Normal style contains the following formatting: the Default Font and size, the default language for the version of Word you installed, justification, line spacing,

Widow/Orphan control and any other attributes or formatting that you may have included in the default setup. I do not recommend permanently changing the default style of Normal unless you are 100% sure you will use the change 99% of the time. Change Normal only for the current document or template.

The primary advantage of using styles to format text is consistency - every time you use the same Style, the same formatting is assigned to that paragraph. Therefore, if you have headings throughout your document, you define the Style one time and assign to each heading and all the headings are the same format. Another advantage of Styles is a Style defined for a particular document or template. I think one of the best things about Styles is that they follow the document. Just think, you set up a document using Styles for formatting and someone else opens that document to make changes and they are using the same styles that you created.

Auto Text and Auto Correct

Auto Text is a quick and efficient way to enter frequently used text. The Auto Correct feature corrects frequently misspelled words. Both features are time savers that all users need to learn more about. **(Insert, AutoText, AutoText)** I have known users to enter entire documents as Auto Text and just by typing the beginning text of the document and touching enter, the entire document text appears on the screen. Auto Text is just this side of a macro – when text is needed, it isn't necessary to create a macro and then run the macro.

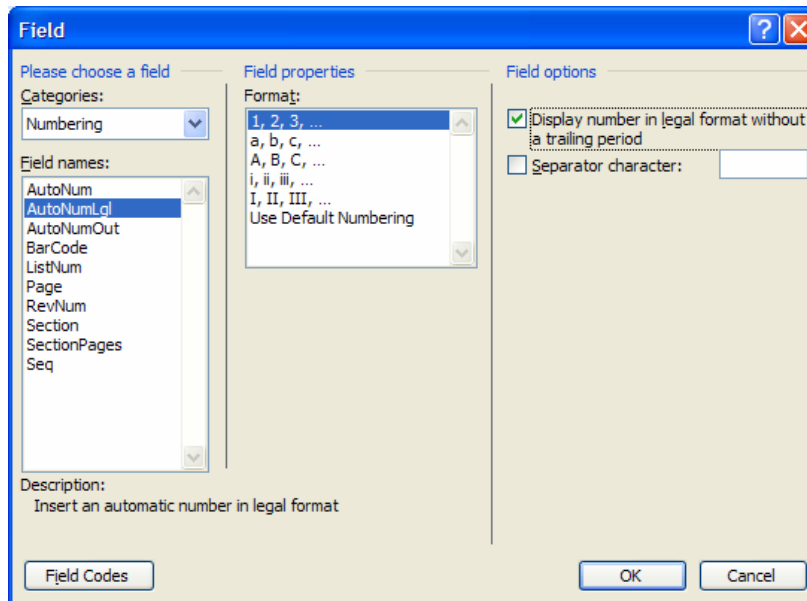
Auto Correct is great for replacing the words that you frequently mistype. TEH becomes THE This one is a common problem for the fast typist. Another way to use Auto Correct is for special words that you can't remember how to spell. Medical conditions or drugs, environmental words or technical terms can be given a code to represent the word. Then just type the code and the correct word is entered. I know that have difficulty typing the phrase Administrative Law Judge so by just entering that phrase as xalj. Then whenever I need to type that phrase, I type xalj and touch the spacebar and Bingo! - the phrase is there and spelled correctly. I like using an "x" in front of initials so that if I ever need to use the initials (say of a person) I get the full text needed and I can use the initials of a person when I just need their initials.

Combining Features

Another use of Auto Text is to combine the feature with another frequently used Word feature such as AutoNumbering. One of the most requested uses of automatic numbering is in an incrementing phase like **Response to Interrogatory No. 1**. You

can make this phrase an Auto Text. The key to creating this Auto Text is to enter the number using a Field (**Insert, Field**)

To create this Auto Text phrase: Type the phrase including the underline and bold attributes up to the number. Insert, Field, Categories is Numbering, Field name is AutoNumLgl, Field properties is 1,2,3... and check the Field Option for Display number in legal format without a trailing period, click OK. Remember to finish typing the phrase.



Then select the entire phrase and Add it as an Auto Text. To use this Auto Text, just start typing Response and touch the Enter key and keep on working.

Corrupt Documents

Have you every tried to open a document and it opens as scrambled text or may not open at all? Corruption can happen at any time in a document. There are several things to try to work past this corruption – Insert the corrupt document into a blank document, email through the internet to yourself or someone else or open in Notepad or use another wordprocessing software. Microsoft Word gives you another option – using the Open and Repair feature. File, Open and Navigate to the folder where the document is located; Single click on the document; Click on the down arrow by the Open button and select Open and Repair. This method may remove the document's formatting but the text appears.

Word Sanity Pack from MicroLaw

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